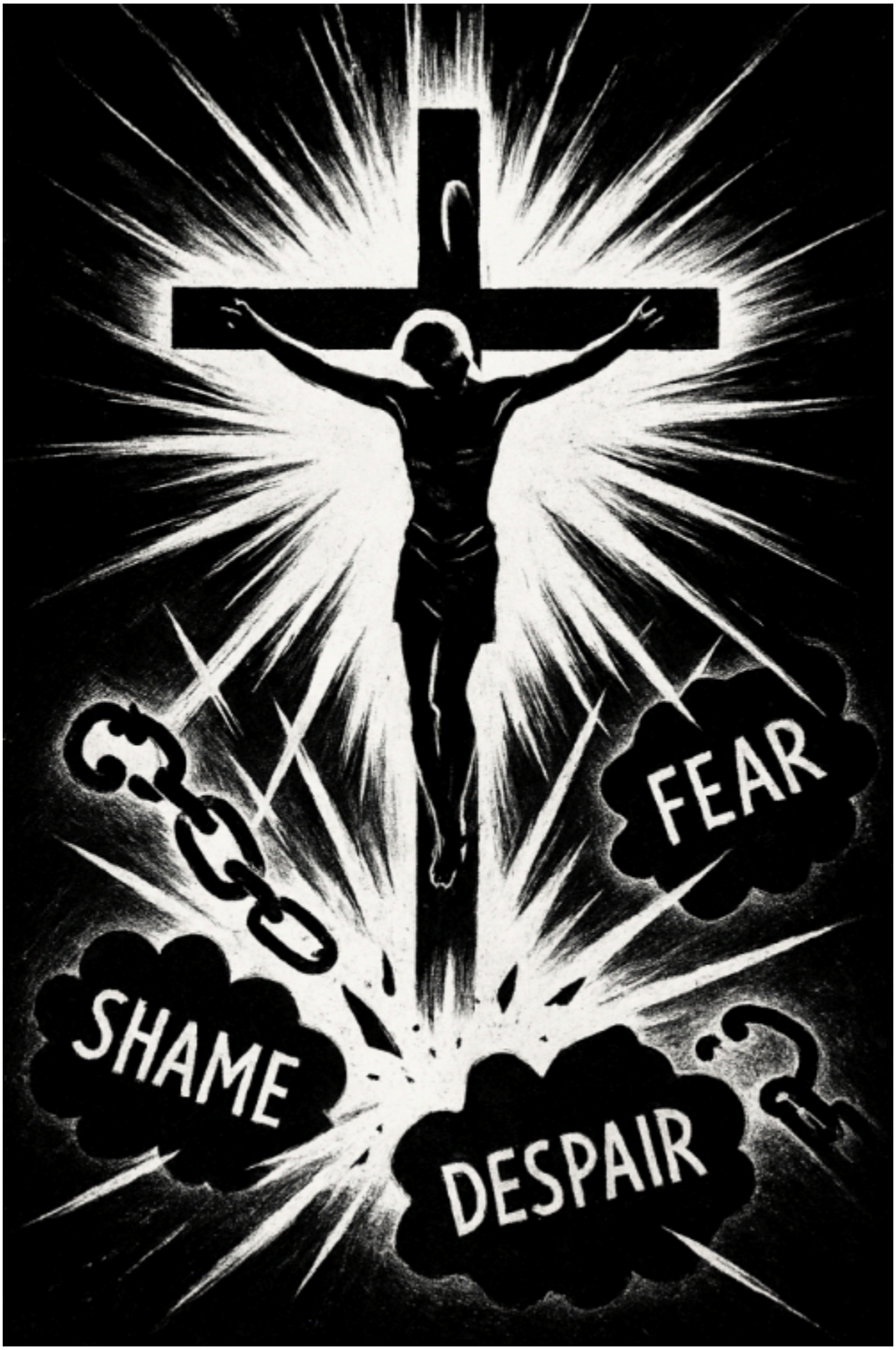
THE CROSS DOES A SCANDAL



A Note on Sources

This book is a collage.

Everything here comes from my blog posts written over 24 months of real-time wrestling with God during unemployment, illness, and the daily crucifixions of trying to be a father and husband while everything falls apart.

I've pulled pieces from different posts and woven them together because the same truth kept showing up in different contexts. The saving message doesn't change, but it refracts differently depending on which wound you're looking through.

Some passages are quoted exactly as I wrote them. Others are assembled from fragments - a line from one post, a paragraph from another - because that's how the message actually works. It's not a linear argument. It's more like the Rosary: the same mysteries, repeated, each time going deeper.

I haven't tracked every citation perfectly. This isn't scholarship. It's verbal vomit that somehow points to Christ crucified. If you want the original context, the blog is there. But honestly, the context is always the same: life

is hell, the cross makes sense of it, and there's a freedom in that which nothing can touch.

The purpose here is to get this saving message to people who are hurting, using whatever voice God gave me. If something here helps you breathe, pass it on. That's what it's for.

All material drawn from boydcamak.wordpress.com, 2023-2025

Boyd Camak
Hypocrite with logs in my eyes. (Matthew 7:3-5)
Admiring the counterintuitive way. (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

>>WHEN THE BOTTOM DROPPED OUT

Being crucified by the world doesn't surprise or scare me. Not being crucified by the world surprises and scares me.

>This Ain't Working

I did everything right.

I was responsible. I kept my resume updated. I networked. I prayed. I asked for advice from wise people. I trusted God's plan.

And I still ended up here—unemployed, sick, watching my savings disappear, wondering how I'm going to provide for my family.

This is what Christians call a crucifixion—an existential crucifixion. Same thing happened to Jesus. He did everything right and ended up being executed in the worst way possible by an alliance between the religious authorities and the government.

The Way had defanged all of that power for those who put their chips on Jesus—who were all in. That was and is a direct threat to those who have put all of their chips on riches and on power and control.

Can you imagine trying to threaten a true Christian saint with poverty or torture or hell? He/she/they would probably thank you for it and pray for you and try to help you.

>Already in Hell

The tragedy is that we try to pretend that if we just keep up appearances, if we just scramble enough that we're going to get it all together and we're going to be okay.

But that's not true.

And that's okay. It's okay not to be okay.

It's not about avoiding hell. It's a recognition that life already is hell—although it often takes something shocking or tragic for us to recognize that.

What is existentialist Christianity? Well for me anyway it's first of all a clearing away, a setting aside of the formulas and the theologies—especially as they are presented at the popular level and also setting aside the question of the supernatural—and looking at the life of Christ (which is an embodiment of His teaching) as a framework for living...for orienting oneself in this world that many of us feel thrown into without our prior consent.

If we look for peace and joy in entertainment, success, riches, pleasures—we are bringing judgment on ourselves today—because those phantoms promise everything but lead only to emptiness, meaninglessness, and despair.

>Faith Is Not A Pop Quiz

The gospel is not sophisticated. It is so simple that it upends all of my categories and exposes the vacuity of all of my intellectual constructs.

Jesus said that He is the Way. He didn't say that He is a pop quiz. This idea belongs to the likes of Ernest Hemingway, not Jesus.

But what's more important? Eating and living, rather than starving--eating Christ's flesh, drinking his blood and living, including living existentially or—analyzing the menu?

The problem is when I start analyzing that menu rather than facing the mystery. I get up on a high horse about my analysis and my theological insights, rather than staring at a crucified/nitrogen asphyxiated dead man and meditating on what he taught in word and deed, and eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

They do what?! They eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood?! Excuse me?

Unless I eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood…in the Eucharist…I will not have access to that wordless mystery that was spoken in flesh and blood rather than concepts and blah blah blah.

Christ is the bread of life—without his concrete flesh and blood life rupturing my existential no-exit hell (i.e. "came down from heaven") I would starve to existential death.

So I was out for a morning walk today and praying the rosary and I got to the part about the ascension of Jesus into heaven and I started cogitating on it and analyzing it--I mean obviously we (seemingly secretly--but in reality obviously--prideful and puffed up) theology geeks know that the cosmology (isn't that an in-the-know term?) of the ancient world is old hat... I was trying to figure it out again...

And then I got knocked upside the head by that verse in Acts: 'why are you standing there looking at the sky?' That's exactly what I was doing. I was falling into the same old trap of trying to analyze and figure it out with my brain rather than listening to the Holy Spirit with my heart.

We are already loved by God. Loved by freaking God. Holy fucking shit, full stop.

If we come to him, he'll take care of all the other stuff... But he also says that if you go running after chasing that stuff... then you'll get trapped...

>Setting Aside the Supernatural to Find the Real

I think that a demythologized faith offers an existentialist framework for making sense of the human condition and an invitation to organizing one's life inside the framework of Christ's life. And then leave the rest up to God.

An existentialist/demythologized understanding of the Gospel can be a gateway to the seeker to organize their life in the framework of Christ's life—setting aside any supernatural aspects of faith for God to reveal if/when appropriate.

I've never been entirely comfortable with the phrase demythologization, because to me there's always been something more.

I think that the more demythologized I get, the more I experience Christ's eternal kingdom, which is greater than a myth.

The book *The Gospels Without Myth* by Louis Évely helped me to read the Gospels, read the stories, the miracles, and set aside questions of the supernatural.

It's not that the supernatural doesn't exist. It's that obsessing over it keeps you from the encounter. You can

organize your life in the framework of Christ's life and let God handle the rest.

>The Body Is Part of This Hell Too

I have had a lifelong struggle with obesity and gluttony... I think that I turned to the candy in order to soothe internal pain.

I had to sprint back to the house this morning from the bus stop because I forgot my disabled daughter's backpack. Physically--not a pleasant experience...but a wakeup call...this obesity thing is not just an intellectual/psychological exercise. I really do need Jesus to extricate me, to resurrect me from this prison that I am living in.

Jesus, pull me out of this quicksand, this wet concrete. Rescue me from this disordered eating. From the madness of self-reliance, of clinging to the illusion that I can analyze, self-pop-psychologize, organize, or work my way out of this predicament, this lifelong pattern, habit, these wounds too deep to feel.

I discovered the Certified Eating Disorder Specialist community who exposed the treachery of diet culture.

>The Crucifixion as Normal

I am co-crucified with Christ every goddamn moment of the day. My body is crucified with his. My heart is slain with his.

Whatever the hell happens, whatever the hell they do to me—I have the divine love of Jesus Christ which will explode anything that this world throws against me, either in this life or the next—and knowing that can make this life a little more like heaven day by day as I try to stay close to Him.

The crucifixion, which Christ willingly enters into, exposes the world for what it is in his life and in his death and in his blood. Christ is exposing the lies of the world.

The gospel is not about being saved from an offended deity. It is a revelation of the infinitely extreme lengths that God will go to to demonstrate His love for us—in order to save us from ourselves.

Jesus' ultimate revelation was his action rather than His words. My belief is that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob totally and permanently revealed Himself in Jesus Christ crucified.

>We Connect Through Our Wounds

The tragedy is not that we have wounds, although those are also tragic in their own way, but the tragedy that I'm observing is our fear of discussing and before discussing the fear of recognizing or the fear of even thinking about recognizing the things that are inherent in being human.

I think that the way that you connect with people is through your wounds. And you got to do this with safe people that are not going to abuse you and take advantage of your vulnerability, but you have to get real.

The key is that our wounds—I think it's the Bible or somewhere in the tradition that says, you know, by his stripes we were healed—the idea is that we connect with others through our wounds, through our shared problems.

So, the more that we let other people in, the more that we get help from other people that are healthy people…the more we become like God, the more we become like the Trinity.

You have to get real. The tragedy is that the lie of the devil is that if you keep your guard up…you're just imprisoning

yourself. If we're not letting people help us...that is exactly where the enemy wants us.

>Joseph Looking for Work

I found a model in St. Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. Like Saint Joseph, I have to provide for my family, keep them from danger—maybe move to a new area and find a new job (flight to Egypt, settling in Nazareth).

One of my favorite meditations is Saint Joseph trying to find a job after the flight to Egypt—something that I'm dealing with myself right now.

Saint Joseph escapes this dilemma by being constantly attuned to the spirit and doing what he's asked to do and trusting...

You take St. Joseph, my model, and you think about the mundane things he did in his life. He was a carpenter. He watched over his children. He didn't say anything. He didn't say anything in the Bible.

My primary purpose in life, not my primary purpose, although that may be appropriate, but my primary mission in life, my primary vocation, to use the Catholic term, my primary calling is to take care of my wife and children.

He is a good man. And he keeps me focused on the fact that much, I would say that the majority of my calling is, is not glamorous. And that is a blessing because it keeps me focused on reality.

>>WHAT MY DAUGHTER CAN'T SAY

I am tempted to say: "I have no words." But I do have words and my daughter doesn't and that's the goddamn point!

How can anyone comment on the existential implications of Angelman syndrome when those with first person experience of it can't talk?

I have to stay attuned to the spirit even amid the chaos of young children (including a non-verbal special needs child).

>The Weight of Protection

My primary calling is to take care of my wife and children. Not to have a platform. Not to be recognized. Not to climb any ladder.

To provide. To protect. To be present.

Like Moses, like St. Joseph in the New Testament, Jesus' legal father. Like John the Baptist, like Jesus himself. If we listen and obey the Holy Spirit...

Saint Joseph does embody provision and protection—but in a deeply contemplative and obedient key. He's not the anxious, striving American archetype of the "man who gets it all done." He's the man who listens in silence, dreams the voice of God, wakes up, and does just enough—no more, no less.

St. Joseph leading his family out of danger... Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.

>The Manly Man Lie

I view "manly man" Christianity as a poisonous, fool's gold, demonic, lie.

The tyranny of trying to impress others. Climbing the corporate ladder. Empty, empty things.

Saint Joseph—a figure of quiet strength, humility, and family responsibility—that's the true model of masculine strength.

I continue to look to the example of Saint Joseph as a model of balancing family responsibilities and spiritual life.

Thankfully I found a model in St. Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. I was further encouraged by the sermon today where the priest said that for folks like my neighbors and me raising families in the burbs, selling everything and giving it all to the poor would be the easy way for us—a copout… My family needs me. I will follow the model of Saint Joseph.

>The Quiet Dignity

You take St. Joseph, my model, and you think about the mundane things he did in his life. He was a carpenter. He watched over his children. He didn't say anything. He didn't say anything in the Bible.

I think at some point you have to say, okay, I've been responsible. I've done everything I can do. I'm seeking counsel from wise people. I'm not being a cowboy. I'm staying close to my support team. But at the end of the day, I think you have to face reality just like Christ did on the cross.

Saint Joseph escapes this dilemma by being constantly attuned to the spirit and doing what he's asked to do and trusting...

He is a good man. And he keeps me focused on the fact that much, I would say that the majority of my calling is, is not glamorous. And that is a blessing because it keeps me focused on reality.

>Platform as Betrayal

Having a large public platform is seen as antithetical to Christ's servant-nature and is deemed a betrayal of Christ and makes one a liar.

The goal is to "unveil" the Gospel so it is directly accessible to ordinary people and seekers. Not to hoard it. Not to brand it. Not to build an empire on it.

If you have to charge money for spiritual direction, you shouldn't be a spiritual director. This should go without saying.

If the gospel is good news for the poor, how much should we charge for it?

God for sale. Inquire within.

>>THE CHURCH THAT CURSES THE SUFFERING

When someone is suffering, is in pain, the best way to curse them, to maximize cruelty, and to dismiss their experience as unimportant is to explain how God loves them, and has a plan for their life, and how their pain fits into a bigger picture.

>God for Sale

There is an explicit and strong rejection of commodifying the Gospel, viewing it as a betrayal of Christ's message and the example of St. Paul.

If you have to charge money for spiritual direction, you shouldn't be a spiritual director. This should go without saying.

If the gospel is good news for the poor, how much should we charge for it?

God for sale. Inquire within.

The Christian Industrial Complex. Monetization. The tyranny of trying to impress others and climbing the corporate ladder as empty, empty things.

>Taking the Lord's Name in Vain

Taking the Lord's name in vain doesn't mostly mean saying 'God damn.' It means using God's name to justify things that God would damn. Things like lawless detention and deportation, turning Christ into a revenue stream, disagree-with-me = disagree-with-God manipulation, snuffing out lives with the power of the state. Let's all poke the devil in the eye and break free from this slavery!

R.C. Sproul & popularized Calvinism = metaphysical rape... (note to Reformed "pastors"—Repent!—for your own soul! James 3:1)

Grace-as-violence theologies. Reformed "Christianity." The belief-or-burn framework that makes God into a tyrant and the cross into a legal transaction.

>Maximum Cruelty

When someone is suffering, is in pain, the best way to curse them, to maximize cruelty, and to dismiss their experience as unimportant is to explain how God loves them, and has a plan for their life, and how their pain fits into a bigger picture.

That's not comfort. That's gaslighting. That's using theology as a weapon against the wounded.

The cross is where theologies go to die.

There is no answer. Just a bloody corpse.

>The Threat of Primitive Christianity

The Way had defanged all of that power for those who put their chips on Jesus—who were all in. That was and is a direct threat to those who have put all of their chips on riches and on power and control.

Can you imagine trying to threaten a true Christian saint with poverty or torture or hell? He/she/they would probably thank you for it and pray for you and try to help you.

Once we are co-crucified with Christ, there's nothing the SOBs can do against us anymore.

That kind of freedom is dangerous. It can't be controlled. It can't be bought. It can't be threatened into submission.

That's why the religious authorities and the empire crucified Jesus. And it's why institutional Christianity has spent two thousand years trying to domesticate the

gospel—turn it into something manageable, marketable, useful for maintaining order.

>I Cannot Be For Jesus and For Empire

I cannot be for Jesus and for empire. If I can't see this when looking at a crucifix, I need to look harder, longer, and more frequently. God have mercy on my oblivious, preoccupied, self-centered, indifferent, southern-raised, elite-educated, economically insulated white man's soul.

From a Christian perspective, a meritocracy is just as bad as an oligarchy.

We value intelligence to the point that we openly and aggressively discriminate against people who aren't book smart in traditional ways—and celebrate this as a great virtue. We do not value wisdom.

The first form of resistance is telling the truth.

When we ignore the poor, the hungry, those in prison, etc. we are ignoring Christ--the only source of joy and peace. We can be physically close to Christ by being physically close to the poor, the stranger, the prisoner, etc.

I agree with Christians who aren't interested in #socialjustice. I'm interested in social injustice. h/t the Apostle James

I had another post about how women had to choose between living on the street and, you know, starving and freezing and their other choice is prostitution... you've got to step back and say, what is it about the human condition that creates these things?

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

>>DROWNING IN THE TRINITY

I'm going to surrender. I'm going to drown all my problems in the Trinity.

>Thy Will Be Done. Full Stop.

When I got to the first 'our father' in the rosary...something clicked... 'Thy will be done.' Full stop. Including a full stop of the analysis.

I was on a run today and started praying the rosary, and I stopped at 'conceived by the Holy Spirit' and I started reflecting on the Trinity... This to me was an experience of 'to Jesus through Mary' rather than a concept.

My one job in life is to do the Will of the heavenly father... This was a moment of simplification and a breath of peace and a three-dimensional clarity when I realized that my only task is to do the will of father.

The line—"What do I want out of life."—sounds responsible and empowering, but it's not the Way that Jesus taught and lived and it necessarily leads to confusion, anxiety and despair.

I had asked God—how can I be healed by Jesus who was physically wounded, but who did not suffer from the childhood family-of-origin emotional wounds that I did since He had the perfect mother. The answer that I got was Jesus doesn't need me to be perfect for Him to love me, and I need to experience Christ's healing love through a mother's love. Just like the world needed Mary to experience the love of God incarnate.

>Stop Project-Managing God

I continue to struggle with the need to stop trying to "project manage God's will". The spiritual goal is: "Thy will be done. Full stop. Including a full stop of the analysis."

All I can do is say—here I am Lord…what's next? And then go about my day, trusting that He will teach me how to listen closer and closer and closer…until all the other voices—shame, blame, guilt, fear, confusion…get quieter and quieter and quieter, until they eventually fade away…

The spiritual journey is about dialing in more and more and more into Christ's presence and wordless (usually) communication to each of us (often through more and more and more personal crucifixions).

>The Trouble With Self-Reliance

The trouble with self-reliance is the self I'm relying on.

I can rejoice that the more difficult my circumstances, the easier it is to see and feel both my total dependence on Him AND His total dependability.

My way through fear of ANYTHING big or small is TRUST. God keep reminding me to trust!

That phrase "active waiting" that you hear in spiritual talk never sat right with me. When the scriptures say wait on the Lord, they mean *wait* on the Lord. Wait—don't get ahead of your Leader.

>What Doubting Actually Means

I have a hunch that when St. James, in his book in the New Testament, when he says, praying without doubting, and when one prays without, they're like a ship tossed about, or something to that effect. I have a hunch that what he really means is praying without surrendering, or praying without trusting, or praying without being all in.

In other words, if one is going to be open to God's help, one has to surrender to God, in much the same way that if one is going to get a doctor's help, one is going to have to take the medicine, or do whatever things the doctor requires the patient to do, so that if one is doubting, one is not surrendering.

It's not a test. It's not a membership passcode, but rather it is inherent in being able to make oneself able to be helped.

And my view on that is not that Jesus is withholding something from us if we're not all in. It's more like if you

go to the doctor and you're sick, but you only take half of the medicine that they give you.

Double-minded and unstable. A divided will. A split allegiance.

I regard this situation as a catechetical crime. WTF is a church for if not teaching this basic truth? How can one follow Christ as the apostles taught if they are not given this foundational teaching? And it's not complicated. If clergy cannot teach this, what can they teach?

If the Church doesn't teach this, it leaves people with an inoperable gospel. They have the words, but not the working key.

>The Jaws of Life

The gospel message is that God became the jaws of life in order to rescue his children. You know...the jaws of life...it's that bulky equipment that fire and rescue teams use to cut and pry open car doors and cut off car roofs etc.

The Incarnation and Crucifixion are likened to the "jaws of life," bulky, messy equipment used to rescue people from a car crash, emphasizing that salvation is a brutal, messy rescue, not an elegant or smooth process.

I felt the jaws of life, another version of the jaws of life grasped me and pulled me up to this hope, this future, this cloud, this shimmering gold… just like the jaws of life grabbed me in the pit…

I needed someone to throw me a life ring. I needed something beyond me, like the life ring is beyond me. If I could have come up with a way to avoid drowning by myself, I wouldn't need the life ring. And so one of the analogies I use is that the gospel is someone throwing me that life ring. And for me, the most important thing is getting the life ring and getting saved from my existential drowning. I'm not so much interested in how the life ring was made, or what kind of material that the life ring was made of, or how exactly the person threw me the life ring… I just need the life ring so that I can be saved.

>Practical Tools for the Drowning

In my life, there is no more solid, grounding spiritual practice than the Rosary. That's why I again turned to the Rosary during my run to clear my head and mind… I try to literally attach my sufferings (Cf. Colossians 1:24) to the hell that Jesus was literally living through.

When I pray the rosary—while I'm waiting for the school bus to drop my daughters off after school—I am making

an interior dive into a living experience of the events of the gospel.

For me anyway—especially with the rosary, I know I'm not going to be making a good decision if I'm thinking, thinking, thinking… my practice is to meditate on the *events* in the rosary.

I don't have to center myself with meditation, and I certainly don't have to think deep philosophical/theological thoughts. I just show up and sit by the fire of Christ's physical presence and soak in His love.

I find it helpful to lean on others to help me determine what scriptures to read when, and what to make of what the scriptures mean… That's why I read the lectionary.

Clergy who forbid physical access to Christ are forbidding access to Christ. This is a big part of why eastern philosophy and religion are popular. If you choose to cope with the human condition through the mind alone—Buddhism, Taoism, etc. are much better at that than a mutation of Christianity.

We have the sacraments. We have Christ among us. There is this greater reality, and it's both eternal and dynamic.

>Surrender Is Not Defeat

I'm going to surrender. I'm going to drown all my problems in the Trinity.

I have to be ready to surrender *everything* at any point in time—that's just how the kingdom of heaven works... If I'm drowning, I might prefer the texture of a rock, but I'd better grab the floating life ring instead.

To shift from managing life to surrendering it is not defeat; it is freedom. The peace that follows is not escapism; it is the ground of new life.

I can have that experience of encounter with Christ, and drowning my problems in Christ's love and in the Father's love...

My whole concept of who we are has been healed. And we are now conceived by the Holy Spirit, and we are now sons of God.

>We Don't Have to Walk on Eggshells With God

We don't have to walk on eggshells with God. Let it rip.

Some days I hate God's guts. Then I remember this Crucifix.

My daily devotional reader was going on and on about how I should be grateful to God for creating me, for forgiving my sins, and for the promise of eternal life... His whole plan is a big screw up. It would have been better never to have created in the first place.

Any "explanation" of the "problem of evil" (including the "explanation" in the above reflection)--other than a bloody crucifix--is more wicked than the evil itself... God is on the hook. It is not our job to answer for Him.

He is speaking to me all day everyday—I need to remember to listen. To hear. Even if what I hear is nothing... All I can do is say—here I am Lord...what's next?

I can be still in prayer and be buried in prayer. I can descend into the tomb in prayer—Christ's tomb—and let all that mental noise die—knowing that my true life is sustained by Christ's love...

Worshiping Christ is an anchor, a source of grounding that allows me to attend to my duties in an orderly fashion even when faced with voices (external and internal) with conflicting demands and priorities...

>>STARING INTO THE ABYSS AND SEEING GOLD

My brain cannot imagine any type of existence that it is not inherently flawed. But in my heart there's hope. Dammit. But in my heart there is hope.

>The Resurrection Is Not a Happy Ending

But then something funny happened. There are conflicting reports about the details... but people started saying that Jesus is still alive.

The resurrection is not the happy ending of the story of Jesus: it's the story of the re-making of creation itself... to bring life out of nothing...

Through Christ's suffering and resurrection, Christians can find hope and a new beginning, even in the midst of pain and despair.

Easter means that we're not reduced to irony and outrage. Christ's asymmetric warfare of sacrificial love has exposed

the impotence of evil—and the powerlessness of those intoxicated by its lies.

>I Can't Shake Hope

My daily devotion reader today talked about how hope is a supernatural virtue. I guess that explains why I can't shake it. 🤣

My brain cannot imagine any type of existence that it is not inherently flawed. But in my heart there's hope. Dammit. But in my heart there is hope.

St. Jude, also known as Thaddaeus, was one of the 12 Apostles of Jesus and is the Patron Saint of Hope and impossible causes.

>Giving Up Hope for True Hope

My conclusion is, my understanding of Christianity is that you do need to give up hope. You do need to give up hope. But the key question is, what are we giving up hope in?

If our hope is that we're going to hit the curveball out of the park... then we're hoping in the wrong thing... My hope is in Christ. And Christ crucified.

My hope is in the Lord's resurrection, my reason for hope, and for hope that there could be something better is not in my experience, because my experience is one crucifixion after another, and I've found that Christ has walked with me through those crucifixions, and He has delivered me, and it's only on His Word, and it's only on His life that I can trust that He has achieved victory.

If we try to fill in the blanks, if we try to write the ending, if we try to say what resurrection is, if we try to speculate about what's happening or what's going to happen after death, if anything, if we try to pin it down and explain why we should be joyful, then it's a tragedy. Because then Easter's a tragedy, because then we are trying to go back and resurrect ourselves again, which is the exact problem that we had as humans.

If I am determining what the *it* is, if I am thinking that God has to meet this objective that I think is essential—then I'm hoping for a lie.

The resurrection becomes a tragedy only when humans attempt to define it or anticipate it based on their own understanding or desires.

Without the Resurrection, any continued existence of our current miserable life would be a tragedy. But Easter is

not a tragedy because Christ's suffering love conquered evil.

Christ's asymmetric warfare of sacrificial love has exposed the impotence of evil—and the powerlessness of those intoxicated by its lies.

The gospel is that Christ was crucified and God raised him from the dead.

That's the hope. Not outcomes. Not explanations. Just that.

>Existential Eternal Life

I love those Christus Victor icons of Christ literally pulling people out of hell. Existentially that is what Christ has done for me.

Surrendering into the crucible/"descent into hell"... offers the "existential eternal life" of a way to approach all of of life's "problems" through surrender... and hope of the world to come.

God permits our psycho-social-emotional-circumstantial crucifixion, and on the third metaphorical day, resurrects us into our special place in the Body of Christ.

Christ is risen! We can rise existentially with Him! I have been raised existentially with Him!

>The Land of the Living

I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you…

For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory…

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

>Joy Is Refusal

Joy is a refusal of existential despair. Its source is contact with Reality aka Christ's Kingdom... It is a refusal to avert one's eyes from the depths of our wounds... only to find that one cannot will away the radiant darkness of the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge.

Joy and pain are comingled at the root of our reality.

It is utter foolishness...and an escape hatch from the misery of the human condition and existential despair.

>Interior Freedom

He is here in the present, offering us the kingdom—interior freedom and peace. If our treasure is in Him, we are not enslaved by our job, our reputation, our possessions, or even our own problem-solving ability.

To 'have your loins girded and your lamps burning' is to live in a state of nepsis: alert, attentive, and ready to meet Christ at any moment.

To sow seed without guarantee, to listen instead of striving, to reach out with no agenda but faith—this is not collapse. It is kenosis. Self-emptying. It's the heart of Jesus' own life and ministry.

I am a part of a much larger story—God's story—and I'm not the center of it. I don't need to—and it's impossible to—figure it all out.

My conclusion… is that our 'symphonies' are not just killing time before the main event—eternity. By grace they are made into the fabric of eternity itself—which is the only perspective that reveals their final significance and meaning.

Only love is stronger than death.

The only true philosophy is a dead man on a tree.

>Pass It On

If something here helped you breathe, pass it on. That's what it's for.

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The cross does a scandal. It keeps doing it. And there's nothing the SOBs can do about it.

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